



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

April 2014 Newsletter



From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Month	EBT Transactions	Debit/Credit Transactions	Total Transactions	EBT Sales	Debit/Credit Sales	Total Sales
January	58	395	453	\$1,399.49	\$14,822.50	\$16,221.99
February	28	348	376	\$1,007.88	\$12,511.22	\$13,519.10
March	29	570	599	\$1,226.89	\$17,365.99	\$18,592.88
Total for Year	115	1313	1428	\$3,634.26	\$44,699.71	\$48,333.97

March 2014 Facts:

Total sales for March this year were higher than March 2013 (\$18,592.88 compared to \$13,966.15). The number of EBT transactions were lower in 2014 than in 2013 (29 compared to 59). For March 2014, there were a total of 599 wireless transactions compared to 553 in 2013.

In March 2014, there were 193,488 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$44,145,268 in benefits were issued in March to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding March sales:

There were 24 farmers who were active in March and 9 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Iowa Food Coop (8) Des Moines
- ❖ Allen's Grove Greenhouse (5) Donahue
- ❖ Grossman Meats (4) Preston
- ❖ Oak Hill Acres (2) Atalissa
- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm (3) Ames
- ❖ Sawyer Beef (2) Princeton
- ❖ Iowa Supreme Meats (1) Burt
- ❖ North Iowa Berries and More (1) Mason City
- ❖ Yoder's Natural Farm (1) Bloomfield

Congratulations go out to Iowa Food Coop for having the highest amount of EBT transactions and the highest amount in EBT sales. Great Job!

Are you ready for the 2014 Farmers Market season?

It is hard to believe that the 2014 Farmers Market season is just around the corner. Tracy has been working on bringing up the May machines.

Below are some things that you will need to do before your first market day:

- Charge your battery before your first market.
- Run a credit and a debit transaction.
- Call Tracy to run an EBT transaction.
- Check your paper supply. Farmers with lower volume of sales should have 1-2 rolls of paper. The farmers with large volume should have 3-5 rolls of paper.
- Make sure to know where your charger cord is.
- Have your signs cleaned up and ready to go.

Every year it seems like we have some machines that don't have EBT loaded on them. That is why it is extremely important to run a test EBT transaction before you head to market as this allows time to correct this issue.

Farmers Market Brochure

The brochure is completed and we are in the process of getting it printed. The brochure will again be available at the county DHS offices as well as we are going to mail out some brochures to all of the Market Managers at the markets that you will be attending. We think this will be beneficial for not only the Food Assistance families but for you the farmers. If you would like some brochures to hand out at your vendor stand, please let me know and I will send you some.

Total Merchant Services (TMS) Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ)

This pertains to only the farmers that have TMS as their merchant provider. An e-mail/letter was sent out alerting that everyone is now required to complete a yearly Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ).

The survey takes about 5 minutes and has to be completed by June 1st or you will be assessed a monthly charge of \$19.95 until the survey has been completed. Please take a few minutes and complete this questionnaire.

Seed & Vegetable Plants can be purchased with EBT

Many greenhouses and markets will be opening soon, so we wanted to remind everyone about allowable food items for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) EBT. Seeds that grow eligible food items can be purchased with an EBT card. This includes herbs, tomato, cucumber seeds, etc. EBT cards can also be used to purchase plants that produce food, such as pepper plants, herbs, and tomato plants.

Note: EBT cannot be used for hot drinks such as hot coffee, tea, cocoa or any hot prepared foods such as a burger or brat off the grill.

Changes to your contact information?

It is very important that DHS has your current e-mail addresses and your correct phone numbers. Tracy sends out a lot of important information and if DHS does not have your current information you could be missing out on important information. Please make sure that if you change your e-mail address or you drop or pick up a new phone number that you share that information with Tracy.

Paper for your wireless machine

Just a reminder that DHS supplies the paper rolls for your wireless machines. It is imperative that you use thermal paper or it could ruin your machine. Please do not use any other type of paper in your wireless machine other than the paper that DHS supplies. If you are running low on paper, please give Tracy a call.

Reminders:

1. Remember that you cannot ring up a sale for another vendor. You could lose your Food Stamp certification and be terminated from the Wireless Project.
2. Since you are paying for the commercial transaction fees, be sure to keep track of what you are paying so you can use those expenses as a tax deduction.
3. You cannot set a minimum purchase amount. If an EBT household wishes to purchase \$.50 in onions, you do need to process the transaction. Same for any debit or credit transaction.
4. Hot foods and hot drinks (cocoa, coffee, and tea) cannot be purchased with SNAP EBT benefits.
5. If your Nurit machine quits working, you need to call TMS Tech Support at 1-888-848-6825. This is the phone number on the side of your machine. If you can't get the problem solved, please give Tracy a call.
6. If your VeriFone machine quits working, you will need to call Jason Butts at 402-574-7086 or Chris Shanahan at 402-574-7016. If you can't get the problem solved, please give Tracy a call.
7. Call Tracy if you need any supplies such as paper rolls, power cords, or battery.
8. The second battery that we provide to you was purchased by DHS. If you ever need to return your wireless machine, be sure to keep one battery, carrying case and signs.
9. **Charge your batteries before market.** You should always have a charged battery, ready to go for market. If a battery is not holding a charge, contact Tracy for a replacement.
10. Please make sure to keep the original box that your machine came in as it contains the Sim card, which is needed to identify your machine if you have to call TMS.

Help Desk

We are here to help you!

When you have questions about:

- **Participating in the Wireless project or reimbursement questions? Call Tracy Penick at 515-281-4935.**
- **What you can sell to EBT customers, or being authorized to accept EBT? Call USDA/FNS at 515-421-3248.**
- **Food Assistance eligibility? Call Kari Lind at 515-281-7000.**
- **Supplies – call Tracy Penick at (515) 281-4935.**